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COMMUNITY

Covid numbers expected to remain stagnant ... p. 2

REGION

MassWildlife proposes license increase ... p. 5

EDUCATION

BHS Senior featured in Q&A ... p. 7

SPORTS

Orioles score early, but fall to Ware ... p. 11

Petition submitted to move disc golf course

MELINA BOURDEAU
Staff writer

BELCHERTOWN – A petition seeking to move the location of the proposed disc golf course from its current location has been submitted to the Belchertown Selectboard.

The petition, which had 15 certified signatures, was submitted last week to the Town Clerk's office.

The petition, created by Karl Krawczyk, seeks to see if the town will votes "to move the disc golf course to a piece of property to a better location which will accommodate league and tournament play without disrupting the quality of residents'/abutters' lives," according to Town Clerk Colleen Toothill-Berte.

The current location of the proposed disc golf course is behind Constanino Field.

As of Monday, March 22, it is not clear whether the question



PHOTO BY MELINA BOURDEAU

See PETITION, page 8 •

A petition signed by 15 Belchertown residents has been certified and sent to the Selectboard as of Monday, March 22.

Granby sees fifth COVID-19 death

MELINA BOURDEAU
Staff writer

GRANBY – The Granby Board of Health discussed the latest COVID-19 cases, another death due to the virus and the frustration surrounding data reporting at its recent meeting on Tuesday, March 16.

Board of Health Chair Richard Bombardier began the discussion.

"We have another person that was claimed by COVID-19," he said. "And someone we didn't know had been taken early on, so we've now in our little town, there have been five deaths from COVID-19. Today was a terrible day, there were eight positives today."

There were 16 cases in Granby from Jan. 1 to March 9, according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health COVID-19 dashboard. There was a total of

See COVID DEATH, page 10 •

Selectboard supports 6 Berkshire grant process

BCA speaks on process

MELINA BOURDEAU
Staff writer

BELCHERTOWN – The Selectboard unanimously supported submitting an expression of interest for the Belchertown Cultural Alliance to pursue a grant opportunity for the 6 Berkshire St. building on the former Belchertown State School property.

BCA President April Jasak-Bangs and Vice President Johanna Hammer presented to the board about submitting an expression of interest letter for grant opportunities for 6 Berkshire Ave and the Tadgell Hall.

Jasak-Bangs explained the one-stop grant program which the letter would be sent to, along with other departments interested in grant funding.

The community one stop grant is 10 grant programs which are

able to be accessed under one application portal," she said. "These are proposals that come from the municipality but could have partners with non-profits."

The letter of intent is due April 2 and the Selectboard would not have a meeting in time to vote later. The town can submit up to five letters.

She said the letter would allow the group to get in front of a grant committee to get feedback prior to submitting an application. The town can apply for as many applications as it wants.

She added that another highlight of the under-utilized building program is that the grant would be unmatched, which means the town would not be required to raise a portion of funds.

The BCA has completed a feasibility study on 6 Berkshire Ave.

See GRANT PROCESS, page 8 •

'Everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day'

BCOA hosts holiday drive-through

MELINA BOURDEAU
Staff writer

BELCHERTOWN – Thirty-one lucky seniors stopped by the Belchertown Senior Center last Wednesday to grab the St. Patrick's Day giveaway.

The drive through event featured a gift and a free raffle ticket for a chance to win the scratch ticket shamrock loaded with \$100 of scratch tickets.

People could also tune in to radio station 88.9 for Celtic music to enjoy on their rides.

SEE MORE PHOTOS
ON PAGE 8



Belchertown Senior Center staff Mariah Diesi, Katie Martin, Heather Woodworth, Jessica Langois and Kim Rossi dressed up in green to celebrate St. Patrick's Day last week.



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COMMUNITY

QHD: COVID-9 numbers expected to remain stagnant

MELINA BOURDEAU

Staff writer

BELCHERTOWN — March's COVID-19 case numbers are expected to remain stagnant, according to Quabbin Health Director Judy Metcalf.

"Belchertown's positivity rate will be 1.56% when (Thursday's) report is used by the state," Metcalf wrote in an email to COVID-19 Task Force members. The letter was read into the record during last Thursday's meeting. "I expect at the close of the week on Saturday evening, our weekly case count will remain stagnant, as we have been for last few weeks," she said.

The case positivity rate and the rate per 100,000 were higher than the last two weeks, according to the Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health metrics from Feb. 28 to March 13.

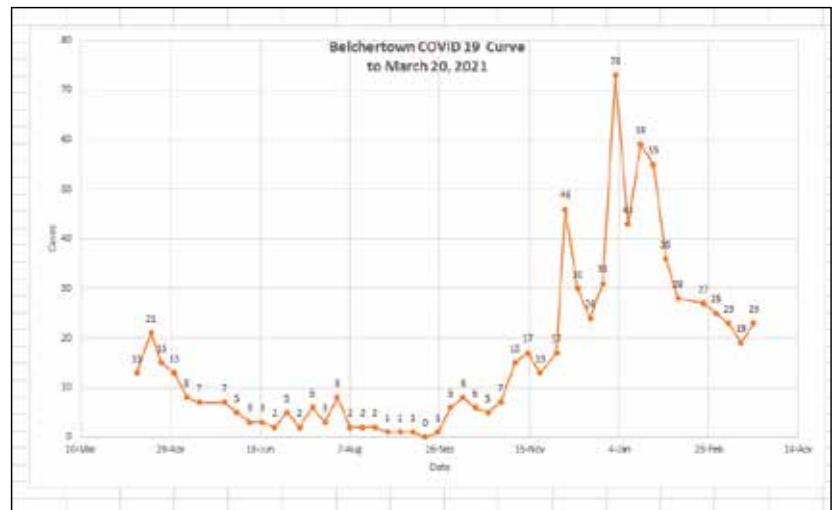
The current case positivity rate is 2.84%, last week the rate was 2.11%. The current rate per 100,000 is 18.3, last week the rate was 17.8.

Belchertown remained in the yellow.

There were 23 new cases of COVID-19 from Sunday, March 14 to Saturday, March 20 according to Quabbin Health District reporting. There have been a total of 775 cases of COVID-19 in Belchertown.

The total deaths due to COVID-19 remains at 16.

There were 1,102 tests performed in this weekly period, bringing the total number of tests on Belchertown residents to 30,632, as of March 17.



COURTESY PHOTO

In the meeting, members discussed Gov. Charlie Baker's reopening plans for Massachusetts.

Task Force and Board of Health member Hope Guardenier said the Board of Health will be taking up the matter of reopening beyond Phase three step one, which the board opted to stay in at its March meeting.

"A lot of things about going into step two doesn't really apply in Belchertown. There are no arenas, stadiums, shows or venues that are really utilized by the public. If Fenway opens for shows or sports...that's still going to happen even if Belchertown stays in step one. There will be changes in opening and that was the rationale for staying in step one was to see what happens with that opening across the state."

She said the COVID-19 variants play a large part of why March is a "make it or break month."

Board of Health and Task Force member Colleen Duroshea said Europe is "ramping up right now."

"Italy just shut down. We have to worry because we're usually two weeks beyond them. When things happen there it usually happens here two weeks later," she said. "We have to keep our eyes on the situation for a couple more weeks."

Further in her letter, Metcalf said vaccination availability remains an issue for people.

"Vaccine availability remains an issue. Demand still exceeds supply at this point," Metcalf wrote. "It will only be more difficult on Monday when Phase two group three become eligible. That group includes essential workers, DPW, water, sewer, public health workers, building inspectors, grocery and pharmacy workers, bus and van drivers, etc."

Metcalf also provided information about those who are hesitant to get vaccinated.

"Data is now shared by zip code. I have not yet had a chance to study in detail Belchertown's data to a granular level. But one thing is very clear: men are seeking vaccines at about half the rate of women. The difference is greatest among white men," she wrote to the task force. "Previous successful health education campaigns directed to men focus on their role as spouse, father, son. For example, quit smoking, get a colonoscopy, get vaccinated for your family, who are counting on you to be there for them."

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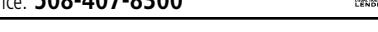


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■ COMMUNITY

Open air burning season runs through May 1

STAFF REPORT

BELCHERTOWN – Open Air Burning Season for domestic tree trimming runs through May 1, 2021.

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Once this form is received, the department will email your registration number along with all necessary information on activating your permit on any day you wish you burn. Please be sure and include a mandatory email address on your form.

Pre-k to eight to return full time April 5

BY MELINA BOURDEAU

Staff writer

GRANBY – The Granby School Committee opted to send students from pre-K to eighth grade to school full-time beginning on April 5 after a new mandate from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Interim Superintendent Carol Hepworth updated the School Committee at its March 16 meeting.

On March 5, DESE adopted amendments to the student learning time regulations on an emergency basis. These amendments provide the commissioner with the authority to determine when hybrid and remote learning models will no longer count toward meeting the required time on learning time hours.

This deadline begins on April 5 for grade pre-K through five and on April 28 for sixth through eighth grade. As of Monday, March 22, DESE hasn't provided a

date for high school grade of nine through 12.

However, after some discussion with Granby administrators, the School Committee supported grades pre-K through eighth grade going back full to school full-time on April 5. The remaining grades would be hybrid until further guidance from DESE.

Granby Jr./Sr. High School Principal Stephen Sullivan said having seventh and eighth grade students back full time would be a good way to determine the school's next steps for the remaining four grades.

Based on the results from a recent survey, Sullivan estimated there would be total of 260 students returning to full time learning.

"For lunch, we would have 84 students in seventh and eighth grade. We can figure out if we can make it work or if we need to add more lunches or get creative with lunch spaces," he said. "I think it would be helpful for our preparation, because we would have a

couple of weeks (before the next group) and it would only benefit us. We would be able to learn from it."

School Committee members also discussed students who will continue to learn remotely.

School Committee Chair Jen Bartosz said the district is going to try to prevent "oscillation" to and from remote to in person learning.

Hepworth said remote learning will be more independent than it has been due to the fact teachers will have students in person and online.

Families who would seek to go in person or remote would have to wait four to six weeks to make the transition, due to the space limitations, according to Hepworth.

East Meadow Principal William Lataille presented information to the committee about full time learning for students in the building starting April 5.

"We have 45 students want to stay remote and 332 that want to come back to five days a week, full time learning. That break

down gives us enough room in every classroom either way to put the desks three feet apart. In some classrooms where the numbers might be smaller in some grade levels, we will keep them as far apart as we can," he said. "If we can keep them six feet apart, we'll keep them six feet apart. There are some classrooms that will be six feet apart there are some that might be five feet apart, but nothing will be less than three feet apart."

He said the school will have seven lunch periods – one per grade – to allow for 20 minute lunches six feet apart.

"The benefit is that they don't have to eat in the classroom, we can keep it in the cafeteria and outside," Lataille said. "On inclement weather days, we're going to use the bleachers in the gym and they can seat 42 children, six feet apart. The seats are plastic so they clean pretty well."

School reopening will be a included as an ongoing topic on the School Committee's agenda.

Holy Week and Easter services

BELCHERTOWN – Christ Community Church, at 1255 Federal St., Belchertown, will have Holy Week celebrations for both Good Friday and Easter Sunday. There will be in person services at 7 p.m. on Good Friday and 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Easter Sunday.

The 7 p.m. Good Friday service and 9 a.m. Easter morning service will also be available via livestream.

Please visit the CCC website www.gracefortheway.org to sign up for one of the services or to find livestream information.



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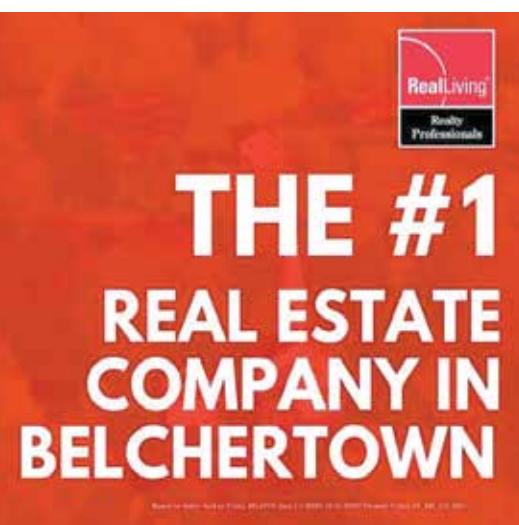
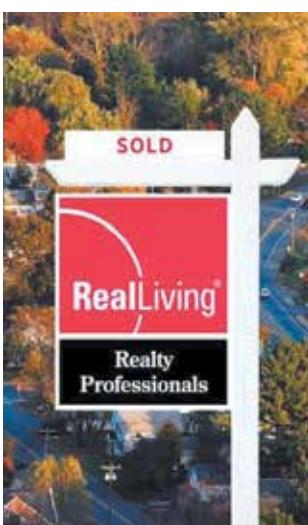
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Virtual town hall topics range from vaccines to passenger rail

MICHAEL HARRISON

mharrison@turley.com

REGION — Sen. Eric Lesser didn't miss an opportunity to take a shot at Gov. Charlie Baker and the state's initial COVID-19 vaccine rollout during a virtual town hall forum held last week over Zoom, Facebook and Twitter.

Questions were asked in real time and also were submitted in advance during registration for the forum.

Over about 90 minutes, Lesser, D-Longmeadow, with aide Joel McAuliff as moderator, fielded questions about the state's COVID-19 vaccine program, economic recovery, winding down pandemic restrictions, the environment, energy, and infrastructure, including the East-West passenger rail proposal. Other topics came up as well.

Here are some of the highlights, including Lesser's opening remarks:

"Normally around this time of year, as the snow starts to melt and spring is here, we're out and about at St. Patrick's Day events and parades and community festivals. And it's just a great time of year as everybody can get out and be together," Lesser said.

"Of course, we can't do that in the normal way this year that we normally do, but we still need to stay connected. And I still want to hear from all of you. So we're experimenting with a new format here to allow everyone to continue to interact safely and get their questions to us. But first, I just want to say thank you to everyone watching and to everybody who is a constituent of mine and beyond for your faith in me over the last year and over the last six years that we've been together and that I've been able to serve as your state senator."

This has obviously been a very hard year, to say the least. But I just want you to know that I wake up every day thinking about you and our communities and what we can do in the state senate and what state government, frankly, can do to deliver services and to make life a little bit easier. We do have brighter days ahead and 2021 is going to be a much more positive year than 2020. But there's a lot we've got to do together to make sure that the recovery is not only fast, but equitable and includes all our communities and all of our people."

The first question, facilitated by McAuliff, was about the "bumpy and lumpy" rollout of the Mass. vaccination program.

"Well, it's a very important question and we've gotten a lot of feedback from this," Lesser said. "And I just want to first thank our constituents who really notified us about some of the issues of the vaccine roll-



COURTESY PHOTO

For about 90 minutes, Sen. Eric Lesser fielded questions about the state's COVID-19 vaccine rollout, economic recovery and more during a live-streamed town hall forum last week.

out very early in the process. Our constituents are not shy and I appreciate that because the calls and the emails and just stopping me on the street or at the supermarket or just out and about gave me a really good eyes on the ground experience about what was happening with the vaccine rollout.

An independent analysis by the Belfer Center at Harvard gave Massachusetts an 'F' and gave West Virginia an 'A' in the initial rollout. And part of the reason for that is shots were not getting into arms fast enough. And the tech and the logistics and the management around getting shots into arms was just completely inadequate. The website crashing was simply inexcusable – frankly embarrassing – for a state like ours that prides itself on technology and healthcare leadership.

But we're focused on making it better moving forward. And I will say we've given pointed feedback to the governor and to the Department of Public Health about where there need to be improvements. I filed emergency legislation on Jan. 28, the day after 75-year-olds were made eligible, requiring a one-stop website portal and a 24/7 customer hotline in multiple languages to give people easier access to booking. It took a little bit, but I'm grateful that at this point the website is in better shape – not perfect – but is in much better shape than it was when we filed that legislation in January. And the call center is in better shape as well. Still not perfect. There's still issues with it, but the capacity has dramatically increased and they've added now 10 languages. So all of this has meant that Massachusetts has now moved up in that Belfer Center ranking from an 'F' to a 'B' now. Still not the best grade. We want Massachusetts to have an 'A,' even an 'A-plus,' AA plus, but we've seen improvement. And I would also just point out, in addition to the advocacy in the bills we filed,

I joined a very important new oversight committee on COVID-19, a joint committee between the House and the Senate laser focused on improving the immediate vaccine rollout, making sure it is equitable and including our underserved communities, in particular our Black and Hispanic communities that have historically faced disadvantages when accessing health care in our state."

Lesser said the committee expected have Gov. Baker to appear at March 23 hearing by the new committee.

Local clinics

Lesser answered two related questions, about the community vaccine clinic in Longmeadow and why "a very robust public health plan in Massachusetts" wasn't more help in the vaccine rollout, with one extended response.

"We've gotten a lot of feedback on this," he said.

"It's important for people to understand the legal and financial structure of how the vaccines are coming to the state. There are a few different distribution channels for the vaccine. One is the federal retail pharmacy program. So these are the vaccine appointments that are popping up, for example, at Big Y, at CVS and Walgreens, at Walmart, at Stop and Shop – the same pharmacy you go to for a flu shot or for your regular prescription medication – those doses come directly from the federal government. So the state government has limited sort of control or exposure to that. Those are really just shipped directly from the vaccine producers via the federal government, directly to the pharmacies."

"The second way that vaccine doses have been getting out is through the state distribution. It was weekly. Now, it's more than that. The federal government sends doses to the states and then once the doses arrive in the state, it is really up to the departments of public health, which are under the control of the governor, to set up a criteria and a system for distributing those vaccines. And I would point out we're operating under a state of emergency, which gives the governor really direct authority to decide the time, place and manner of that distribution. But the lion's share of the funding for this infrastructure is coming from the federal government as well. So the legislature, as a result, has had limited influence and has limited been able to give limited oversight over this process. So initially, the state was helping to distribute these vaccines through local clinics. A decision was made by the (Mass.) Department of Public Health to pull those doses from most of the local

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See TOWN HALL, page 5 •

MassWildlife proposes first license increase in 26 years

TYLER S. WITKOP
Correspondent

Flashback to the year 1996. Bill Clinton began his second term as U.S. president, Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls won their fourth NBA title and a gallon of gasoline cost \$1.23.

In Massachusetts, resident hunting and fishing licenses increased to \$22.50 and a trapping license rose to \$30.50.

Despite drastic changes to everyday life with the advent of the internet and smartphone technology that connects people to goods and services anywhere on the globe with the push of a button, those license fees remain as one of the few relics from 1996 still in place today.

Now, facing drastic increases in both costs and services, and declining revenues, the state's Division of Fisheries and Wildlife is proposing its first increase in license fees, to go in effect in 2022.



Fishing and hunting license fees are scheduled to go up this year as they have not gone up in 25 years. As costs and services, and declining revenues, the state's Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has proposed the increases as its costs and services go up and revenues are declining. About 40,000 pheasants are raised by the state and stocked on lands across the commonwealth.

To better inform the public of the rationale and license structure, MassWildlife is offering a series of online informational sessions via Zoom throughout the month. The last will take place Thursday, March 25 at 6:30 p.m. To participate, visit <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/masswildlife-calendar>.

MassWildlife Director Mark Tisa informed participants of a March 9 informational session that each year, roughly 500 bodies of water are stocked with trout with nearly half being 12-inches or larger, more than 40,000 pheasants are released on public lands for hunters, and the state manages more than 226,000 acres

of land. In addition to managing game species, all of the state's threatened and endangered species fall under the management of MassWildlife.

Budget gap

For fiscal 2021, the division's revenue, according to the presentation, was roughly \$16.9 million. Fees from licenses, permits and stamps accounted for 39% of that figure or roughly \$6.6 million. Forty-eight percent, or \$8 million, came from federal wildlife and sport fish restoration funds.

State mandated expenses such as salaries and health insurance amount for 20% or nearly \$3.5 million of the \$18.4 million in expenses for fiscal 2021, more than what the Division pays for its hatcheries, which is nearly \$2.5 million, or land acquisition and maintenance, which is roughly \$2 million. Thirty-three percent, or roughly \$6 million, is used for habitat management.

"We have been very fiscally responsible," Tisa said of the

management of MassWildlife, pointing to the fact that licenses haven't increased in 25 years. He said had license fees kept with the rate of inflation, hunters and anglers would be paying \$37.52 today (in addition to the \$5 wildland stamp fee).

A major issue leading to the declining revenues is the decline in hunting and sporting (combination hunting and fishing) licenses, which Tisa said is about 50 percent for hunting licenses and roughly 20 percent for sporting licenses. Additionally, the state now issues in excess of 27,000 free licenses to sportsmen and women aged 70 and older each year, resulting in a loss of about \$1 million in non-reimbursable funds.

This year alone, Tisa estimates a budget gap of \$1.5 million between revenue and expenses, which will be made up by tapping into the roughly \$9.5 million in the state's Inland Fish and Game

See LICENSE FEES, page 16 •

TOWN HALL • from page 4

clinics and redirect those doses to the mass vaccination sites. The closest one for us is the Eastfield Mall.

"I was frustrated by it because I know so many of our local communities spent a lot of time and a lot of resources getting those clinics ready and set up. And right now they're empty. So my hope is, is that we're going to be able to get those doses back to local communities as we get more supply, because I feel strongly that as we get into the later stages of this, it's local communities that know their populations the best and are going to have the best ability to, for example, do house visits to vaccinate homebound individuals, to reach out to somebody that might be hesitant and talk to them or walk them through the get them comfortable with taking the vaccine," Lesser said.

"Our local fire departments, our local EMTs, our local community health folks know their neighborhoods and know their people the best. So we should be empowering them to help get the vaccine out rather than centralizing. I'm hopeful that we'll be able to see those open."

McAuliffe read a question from a physician "who says that they've experienced many patients who don't understand the vaccines and are wary about them" and wonders what the Commonwealth is doing for education and awareness, especially in underserved communities. "Well, we need to do a lot more," Lesser said, and referenced his own outreach, including forums and a live-streamed conversation recently with Bishop Talbert Swane II, president of the Greater Springfield NAACP.

"We need to empower local community leaders and trusted leaders, whether it's clergy, community figures, local health care providers and family doctors," Lesser said.

"You know, my dad is a family physician and he had a small family medical practice in Holyoke for two decades and his patients trusted him. And so I think we need to do more to localize the effort and to lift up the voices of local community leaders and local figures who have the trust of their neighborhoods and of their circles and of their family and friends."

Economic recovery

Asked about the pandemic's impact on small businesses, particularly restaurants, salons and other "customer-facing" shops, Lesser said the state's response needs to consider the reality that up to 225,000 of that states lost jobs aren't coming back.

"Those job losses are disproportionately in the wage-earning hourly workforce, disproportionately female because of the nature of the shutdowns and the nature of the impact of COVID-19. It hurt in particular preschools, daycares, health care jobs, restaurant jobs, service-oriented work, which is disproportionately female and also disproportionately men and women of color and immigrants. So we really need to make sure that our aid programs and our policy is focused on where the impact has been most dramatic, and that also includes our small businesses," Lesser said.

"We've worked with the administration on a very large – the largest of its kind in the country – aid program on top of the federal aid that has come in. We've created more than a \$600 million small business aid program targeted at small businesses and businesses that have been the most impacted by COVID-19 with a particular emphasis on minority businesses and immigrant owned businesses in our gateway cities, which of course includes Springfield and Chicopee in my district. In addition to that, actually, just today, hot off the presses, literally an hour ago, the Senate finalized a package of aid, including making TPP loans that came in to businesses through the CARES Act."

One major aspect of that, Lesser said, is immediate tax relief for small businesses.

"They will not be subject to Massachusetts income tax. I think a very unfair situation was going to develop for small businesses that got TPP aid that then used that money to

pay their workers, to keep people employed, to keep the lights on during a very difficult year were now retroactively going to be asked to pay a five percent tax on that money that they don't even have anymore because they've paid it out to their employees," he said.

"That was going to be an unfair situation. So we've (prevented) that. That's going to be put on the governor's desk next week. We've also frozen rate increases for unemployment insurance so that small businesses will not have been subjected to what have been a 60 percent increase in unemployment insurance rates. And very importantly, we've set up a new state level sick leave program so that people who either get COVID-19 or need to take time off to get a vaccine will have a fully paid program. It will not be paid by employers. It's going to be paid by the state.

"In addition to that, we've done something very unique – I'm not aware of any other state that's done this – but we are waiving the tax on the initial round of unemployment insurance checks that are our lowest income individuals have gotten. Those who are 200 percent or less below the poverty line. So this is really about helping the most vulnerable people in our community who have gotten that lifeline of the unemployment insurance. They shouldn't really be paying state tax on that. I think that they should be keeping that and they should be using that to help pay their bills and pay for groceries and other necessities."

To watch or listen to the full town hall, which included questions and comments not included in this story, go to Lesser's Facebook page or psc.pvtv/EricLesser/1zqJVMzzZVKB.

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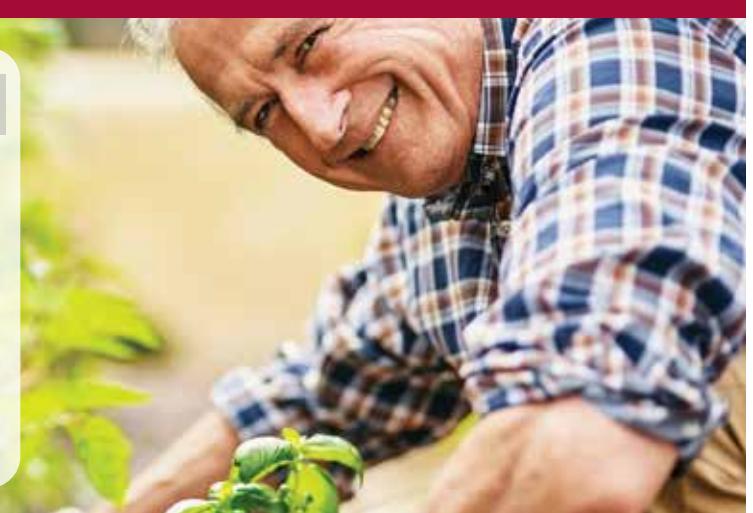
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OPINION**HISTORY MATTERS**

History Matters is a biweekly feature courtesy of The Grateful American Book Prize, which is awarded to children's books that emphasize the importance of American history.

After the Revolution, everything is A-OK

March 16 to March 31: American Revolution, OK and March Madness

JOHN GRIMALDI AND DAVID BRUCE SMITH

Guest columnists

By March 22, 1765, the British, short on funds to absorb the costs of their military presence in the colonies, unloaded the Stamp Act on the overburdened citizenry. Already, they were anteing up for the sugar tax on imported goods, paying an assessment for paper money, and a quartering fee for the housing and food costs of the Redcoats.

The Stamp Tax levied a charge on everything from newspapers, and pamphlets, to playing cards, but that offense kicked off outrage and defiance. According to History.com, "They raised the issue of taxation without representation and formed societies throughout the colonies to rally against the British government and nobles who sought to exploit the colonies as a source of revenue and raw materials. By October of that year, nine of the 13 colonies sent representatives to the Stamp Act Congress, at which the colonists drafted the 'Declaration of Rights and Grievances,' a document that railed against the autocratic policies of the mercantilist British empire."

Although it was eventually rescinded, the public's pique unified the colonists, suffused them with nationalism, and, slowly, activated America's war of independence.

The Grateful American Book Prize recommends "The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution," by Edmund S. Morgan and Helen M. Morgan.

Okay is created

Did you know that the United States does not have an official language? The Constitution does not specify one, nor is there a law which mandates the country to speak English; most Americans have accepted it as their "mother tongue," but adapting it in a very un-British way.

Take the distinctly American "okay," which started out as an abbreviation: "OK." It was common in the mid-19th century for younger, educated men and women to deliberately misspell words for amusement. For example, the slang for "all correct" became "oll korrecht" or OK, and was sopped up in the American lexicon when the editor of the March 23, 1839 edition of the Boston Morning Post, tagged it "OK" to denote that the copy was "all correct" or "oll korrecht."

Other newspapers replicated the abbreviation; it diffused all over the world and morphed into "the most frequently spoken word on the planet."

The Grateful American Book Prize recommends "OK: The Improbable Story of America's Greatest Word," by Allan Metcalf.

March Madness

March Madness is overwhelming the nation. It has been that way since March 27, 1939, when the University of Oregon beat Ohio State University 46–33 in the final game of the very first NCAA men's basketball tournament.

If the Super Bowl causes the nation to stop and focus on football for one day, the annual NCAA basketball tournament holds the attention of the nation about three weeks. It starts mid-month when the "first four" —or first round games—are played, and last until the "final four" games culminate with the selection of the two teams that will compete in the championship.

In the beginning, eight schools were invited to participate; this year, 68 will face off in the men's competition.

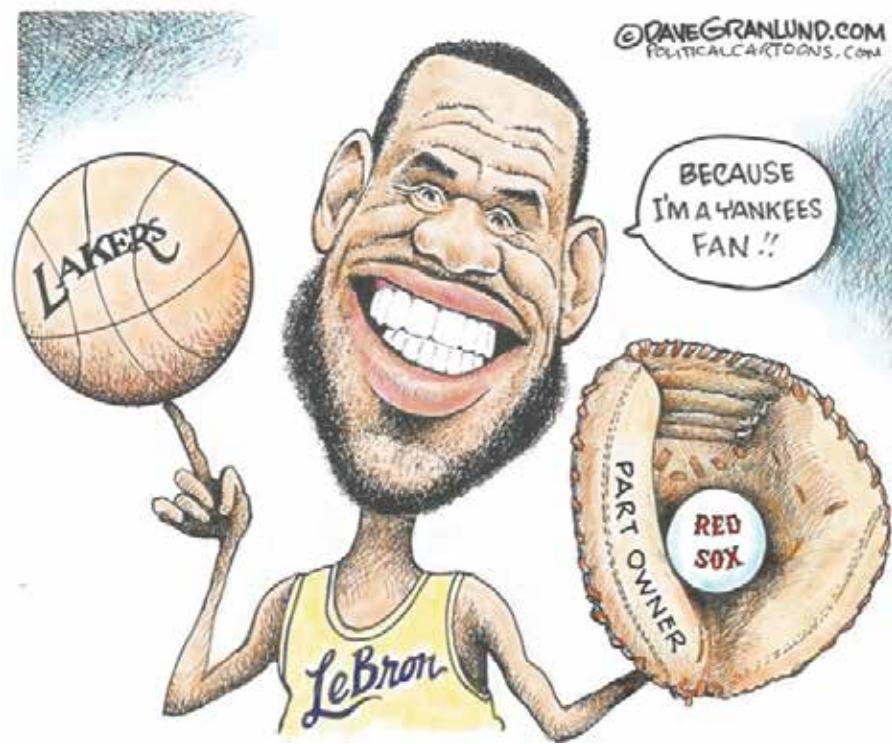
The inaugural women's NCAA tournament of 1982 had representation from 32 schools; the 2021 line-up will be generated from 64.

The Grateful American Book Prize recommends "How March Became Madness: How the NCAA Tournament Became the Greatest Sporting Event in America," by Eddie Einhorn and Ron Rapoport.



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GUEST COLUMN

Fun with houseplants

Just about a month ago I decided to re-pot a number of my "houseplants." I figured the timing was good, since before too long the plants would be responding to longer days with increased growth. They would relish new soil and more room for their roots to sprawl in the bigger pots I would provide. While I have never really felt that my outdoor "green thumb" has transferred to indoor plants, I've managed not to kill enough of them so that one morning of February vacation was spent with my hands in potting soil liberating them from a fate of being root bound in the same tired soil.

One of my favorite houseplants is the Gerber daisy. Most people think of this plant as a summer annual, and it technically is here in the northeast, but frugal Yankees (i.e. Mom and I) have been keeping them alive through the winter for years now. Its pretty pastel daisy-type flowers remind me of those the prankster clowns use to squirt water in the faces of unsuspecting folks. In our house we call it the "happy plant." I had three good-sized pots of them, all with tired soil. It showed by how yellow-green the leaves were. I moistened my compost-based Coast of Maine potting soil and proceeded to pry the plants apart, giving the divisions a fresh pot and a splash of liquid fertilizer once back on the windowsill. I am happy to say I now have one flower and a few others awaiting in the crown! Success!

Three other plants typically grown as annuals were saved from winter's chill and brought indoors as an experiment. One was a lobelia plant that grew in a ceramic pot by my front door all summer. Usually lobelias peter out during the dog days, but this newer variety kept right on blooming right through the heat. For the fun of it, I cut it back in late October and put it, pot and all in my mud room. Lo and behold, it started to grow. I provided it with light, some fresh soil and said liquid fertilizer, and it is actually sporting a few blossoms right now. I am only hoping it will be happy indoors for several more weeks; thankfully lobelias are fairly cold hardy so I can probably get it outside earlier than most flowering plants.

Another annual I overwintered is heliotrope. Given to me as a gift last summer, its purple, vanilla-baby powder scented flowers provided a olfactory pick-me-up whenever needed. Admittedly, this plant struggled over the winter but with fresh soil and a brighter window it is thriving once more. The same goes for a coleus that I got from a my friend Jean a year and a half ago. I decided take cuttings of all three to increase my coffers and happily both

the coleus and the lobelia have rooted. It's been tricky to keep the almost furry heliotrope leaves from wilting while awaiting roots. More research necessary there.

Late last spring I made a mixed planter with succulent type plants for my porch. I used what I had, including two tiny kalanchoe plants rescued from where I don't recall. They looked so pathetic that I planted them almost in the same hole to make one decent-sized plant.

But alas, in just three months of good soil and a warm porch they tripled in size and by February were full of aphids. After a soapy bath they were separated, each given their own pot. Now, one has flower buds! I have read that kalanchoes are easy to propagate. Simply take a cutting of terminal growth two to three inches long, stripping off all but the top 2 or 3 leaves. Allow the stem to callus and then insert into a free-draining type of potting soil, one comprised of peat moss and perlite is ideal. Begin checking for roots in about a month.

Another plant that faced true liberation a month ago was an amaryllis that I received in a fancy clear container. The bulb was waxed, or maybe even covered in some kind of plastic. Hard to tell.. All you had to do was put it on the shelf, no potting up required. Something did not set well with me about this fancy new modus...they want you to throw it away afterwards! But I kept my comment to myself, thanked the person who gave it to me and watched as it bloomed, nicely, but on a shorter stem than what I am used to. Once the flowers had passed it looked as though another stem wanted to put out flower buds, but it just sort of sat there. I decided I would operate, gently peeling the wax off the bulb. After planting in potting soil the amaryllis did bloom and has since put out healthy white roots this last month. Next it will grow a healthy crop of foliage then go dormant before blooming again next fall/winter.

It was a lot of fun to repot and experiment with my "houseplants." Maybe I've had some success because not all of them were intentioned for the house all along. Or maybe my luck is changing!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

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EDUCATION

College NOTES

WNEU engineering students welcomed into Alpha Lambda Delta National Honor Society

SPRINGFIELD – Over 20 students from the Western New England University College of Engineering were welcomed into Alpha Lambda Delta National Honor Society in a virtual induction ceremony held on March 5.

The following students from the College of Engineering were inducted:

Jonathan Couture of Granby, is working toward a BSE in Civil Engineering.

Jasmine Rodrigues-Jones of Granby, is working toward a BSE in Mechanical Engineering.

Having just celebrated its Centennial, Western New England University is a private, independent, coeducational institution.

Students named to Dean's List at RIT

ROCHESTER, NY – The following local residents made the Dean's List at Rochester Institute of Technology for the 2020 Fall Semester. Undergraduate students are eligible for Dean's List if their GPA is greater than or equal to 3.40 for nine credit hours of traditionally graded coursework; they do not have any grades of "Incomplete," NE, D, or F; and they have registered for, and completed, at least 12 credit hours.

Alex Rosenbach of Amherst, who is in the game design and development program.

Griffin Brown of Amherst, who is in the game design and development program.

Noah Troy of Belchertown, who is in the computing security program.

Jacob Potter of Belchertown, who is in the computer science program.

Tatyana Ryan of Belchertown, who is in the computer engineering program.

Alexis Ryan of Belchertown, who is in the industrial engineering program.

Marissa Shaw of Belchertown, who is in the electrical engineering program.

Zachary Trager Macdonald of Amherst, who is in the electrical engineering program.

Ryland Charron of Belchertown, who is in the electrical engineering program.

UMass Lowell names local students to dean's list

LOWELL – Local residents have been named to the dean's list at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Among those recognized for achieving academic distinction for the fall 2020 semester at UMass Lowell are:

- Periya Yath of Amherst, majoring in public health
- Gianna Branco of Belchertown, majoring in nursing
- Kyle Taylor of Belchertown, majoring in electrical engineering
- Deepal Purani of Ludlow, majoring in information technology

UMass Lowell is a national research university offering its more than 18,000 students bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in business, education, engineering, fine arts, health, humanities, sciences and social sciences. UMass Lowell delivers high-quality educational programs and personal attention from leading faculty and staff, all of which prepare graduates to be leaders in their communities and around the globe. www.uml.edu.

Ithaca College students named to Fall 2020 Dean's List

ITHACA, NY – Ithaca College congratulates students named to the Dean's List for the fall 2020 semester.

- Abby Damouras of Belchertown
- Keeley Firinne of Amherst
- Oli Hite of Amherst
- Maxwell Schweik of Amherst
- William Wright of Amherst

About Ithaca College

Founded in 1892, Ithaca College is a residential college dedicated to building knowledge and confidence through a continuous cycle of theory, practice and performance. Home to some 6,500 students, the college offers more than 100 degree programs in its schools of Business, Communications, Humanities and Sciences, Health Sciences and Human Performance, and Music.

Support Belchertown High School seniors

BELCHERTOWN – Do you know a Belchertown High School graduating senior? Are you a 2021 graduating senior? Excited to graduate? Let's celebrate this milestone and share with the community the success of our seniors. Anyone can purchase.

Double-sided lawn signs 12' x 24' for \$12 and 3'x 5' banners for \$32 which have grommets for securing via rope will be available for purchase to celebrate all graduating BHS seniors. Both can be pur-

chased for a combo price of \$40 with a savings of \$4.

The store will remain open until all seniors have been gifted a sign. Once the lawn sign and banners are in, there will be several dates/times for pick up.

All proceeds of this event will benefit the Class of 2021.

The link is https://btownclassof2021.itemorder.com/sale?fbclid=IwAR3D4ZM-wF53AyXWB31wiW5wPF9uMfRI-V2arLZO6RG3_cwVBiaPkKdSv4-eQ.

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Belchertown seniors featured in Q and A



Ethan Andrews plans to major in Biology.



Ethan Andrews

What is your favorite memory from the Nest?

My favorite memory from BHS was the last day for the 2020 cross country season.

What advice do you have for our younger Orioles?

My advice for younger Orioles is to be hardworking and to have fun.

What is your proudest moment as an Oriole?

My proudest moment as an Oriole was when I made varsity my junior year of cross country in a close race at the PVIAC championships.

Belchertown children's meals program menu

For the week of April 5 to April 9

Note: Tuesday through Thursday are small meal kit items. Kindergarten through sixth grade, there will be no in school breakfast. For grade seven through 12, there will be a breakfast rack in the lobby.

Monday – Lunch: Cheeseburger, lettuce, tomato, pickles and sweet potato fries. Kindergarten through sixth grade alternative: cereal meal with yogurt.

Tuesday (Small Meal Kits come home)

Lunch: Kindergarten through sixth grade: chicken nuggets.

Grade seven through 12: pulled pork on a bun, corn and canned fruit. Kindergarten through sixth grade alternative: sunbutter and jelly sandwich.

Wednesday - Curbside Meal Kit Pickup at BHS 11 a.m. from 1 p.m.

Grades seven through 12: remote learning day.

Lunch: Kindergarten through sixth grade: pasta with meatballs, Caesar salad and garlic knot. Kindergarten through sixth grade alternative: tuna wrap.

Thursday – Lunch: Kindergarten through grade 12: hot dog on a bun, chips, vegetarian

baked beans. Kindergarten through sixth grade alternative: min-pancakes and a cheese stick.

Friday – Small meal kits come home and orders due today for next week.

Lunch: Kindergarten through grade six: cheese pizza. Grades seven through 12: chicken parm grinder, roasted broccoli and a rise krispie treat. Kindergarten through sixth grade alternative: Sunbutter scoop, animal cracker and a cheese stick.

Note: The menu is subject to change.

PreK follows a separate menu which has been sent home.

Grades seven through 12: free breakfast rack offers whole grain cereals and cereal bars, muffins, bagels, breads, sweet rolls, pop tarts, fruit and 100% fruit juice, and white milk.

Grades kindergarten through six offer daily in-school lunch entrée alternates as listed on menu with fruit/vegetable options from main meal.

Grades seven through 12 offer daily in-school entrée alternative choices: pizza station, deli bar, and soup and salad.



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People received a St. Patrick's Day themed give-away at Belchertown Senior Center last week. The give-away included a puzzle with crayons, a flag with shamrocks and other surprises.



Katie Martin and Mariah Diesi handed out St. Patrick's Day goodies at a drive through event for seniors last week.

PHOTOS BY MELINA BOURDEAU



Mariah Diesi waits to give out a St. Patrick's Day give-away at Belchertown Senior Center last Wednesday.

Scholarship applications now available

BELCHERTOWN — The Town of Belchertown Scholarship Committee will be awarding year 2020-2021 scholarships to Belchertown residents with acceptances to recognized institutions for post-secondary education. For those interested in applying, please go to <http://www.belchertownps.org/belchertown-high-school/>

belchertown-scholarship-information to access the online scholarship application, and instructions.

Due to COVID-19, please submit your paper application packages via drop-off box located at the Belchertown Central School Office, 14 Maple Street, Belchertown, MA. Applications will be accept-

ed Monday thru Thursday only, between the hours of 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. All applications and required criteria must be submitted no later than March 26.

The Scholarship Committee wishes to thank everyone for their generous donations and continued support, for students.

GRANT PROCESS • from page 1

which was funded in part by Mass. Development.

"This is one of those grant opportunities that could move this project along a lot quicker than we anticipated," Jasak-Bangs said. "Plans for that space include a café space...a certified commercial which would be considered a food incubator where people could get memberships...This building would also have a flex community hub. We envision to be anything from gallery space, workshop space, small business education. Also some affordable office space."

The group is going to need architectural plans in place to move forward. Jasak-Bangs said many of the needs in the building revolve around accessibility.

"An elevator right now the building is not accessible...there needs to be asbestos remediation on the lower level, the parking lot is non-existent at the moment, it's a dirt lot. We would need a better design to allow for flow of traffic and a parking lot to be able to park there," she said. "There is a water main to the building that will need to be updated and my understanding is that it would be pulled from the senior center to be able to house the café."

There is also masonry work, HVAC updates and cosmetic upgrades to the building. Jasak-Bangs added that a more

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GRANT PROCESS • from page 1

will be binding or non-binding on the Annual Town Meeting warrant.

Krawczyk said he submitted the petition because he doesn't believe a competition-size course should be at the proposed location.

"I'm not against disc golf in town, but they're going about it the wrong way. There are all kinds of open land in Belchertown, put it somewhere else," he said. "If you put in there...it will drive wildlife away."

He added that the location should be one which can be patrolled by police.

"We don't need to have hundreds of people in this place," he said. "There needs to be a place where it can be patrolled."

Belchertown Recreation Department Director Kyle Thibeault provided an update on the status of the project.

"We're still in the process of getting on the April Conservation Commission meeting," he said. "We need to submit the wetland delineation right now."

He said once the topic is put on the Conservation Commission's agenda, it will be posted for the public.

At the Recreation Commission meeting on Feb. 10, Recreation Commission Chair Nancy Kwiatkowski said the project has been in the works for years, and only required a vote for an appropriate from the town at the Annual Town Meeting. A warrant article at the 2020 Annual Town Meeting appropriated \$14,000 from Community Preservation funding for the project.

"Community interest in disc golf was first brought to the attention of the Recreation Department in Sept. of 2016. The Recreation Department, along with Pure Flight submitted a grant application to the Community Preservation Committee in Dec. of 2017 to partly fund the construction of the course, which was approved at the 2018 meeting," she said. "In Jan. of 2019 the Conservation commission wouldn't approve the Piper Farm location due to large amount of wetlands."

Following the disbanding of Pure Flight, bids went out for a new designer. The new designer selected was Explore Disc Golf.

"In June 2020, at the annual article 26 voted to appropriate and transfer \$14,000 from the CPC fund to create an 18-hole course off Route 9 at the Constantino Recreation Facility area with said funds under direction of the Recreation Department," Kwiatkowski said. "The vote was a majority yes. A vote to appropriate and transfer funds is the only vote needed for this project. The disc golf is on town property, which doesn't require a vote and we will not be taking a vote on this."

In an interview on Monday, Thibeault added that the project will "stay the course it is currently on."

"If we get the approval for a permit for the project, we will continue at this location, we may be 'breaking ground' by the time the town meeting rolls around," Thibeault said. "We've been trying to address (residents') concerns by working with the designer by looking at locations in relation to property lines, creating more of a buffer and trying to alleviate concerns about this location."

comprehensive list of the building's needs is being made as well.

Selectboard member Ed Boscher asked about the liability of the building being transferred from the town to the BCA.

Town Administrator Gary Brougham said he suggested the town continue to insure the building for personal injury and loss.

"If the BCA were to have a lease or a memorandum of understanding with the town that they also insure themselves and their tenants," he said. "The only way we would be out from under any liability is if we transferred ownership."

He added that the BCA would relieve the town paying utilities and building maintenance. The building would need a lot of renovations and Brougham questioned whether it would be worth it to spend the money to do so.

"I know what the cost of renovating these building is going to look like. It concerns me the amount of money that could potentially be spent for the proposed uses. When you update the water service, the sewer system taking about kitchen appliances, or commercial food preparation that trips all the plumbing codes," Brougham said. "The floors on the lower level would have to be jackhammered out so the plumbing could be put under the floor. This was a former dormitory and it had standard electrical services that were intended for pencil sharpeners and nightstand lights."

He said the first order of business was to send the letter and it wouldn't cost the town anything to submit the letter prior to the due date.

Selectboard member Jennifer Turner said she supported the process.

"I feel comfortable and confident they've put together the work they need to put that information together on behalf of the municipality," she said. "I think it's going to be who from the municipality is going to be hitting the send button for the town."

Ultimately, Superintendent Brian Cameron, the Selectboard and BCA determined that because Tadgell Hall was under the schools' purview, that the group would hold off on submitting an expression of interest.

Granby Library announces youth offerings for April

GRANBY – The following are upcoming offerings for kids and their families through the Granby Public Library.

CFCE Zoom Playgroup and Take & Make at the Granby Library

Each Tuesday, join Marti, the playgroup facilitator from 10 to 11 a.m., for sensory play, stories, songs and take and make crafts from library bags below.

No Playgroup on April 20. Email Marti for a Playgroup Zoom link mwiechman@collaborative.org.

Take and make craft activity bags

These are available Tuesday through Friday in the library lobby between 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Please take one per child.

- **March 30 to April 2:** Watch me grow flower seeds

- **April 6 to 9:** Watch me grow vegetable seeds

- **April 13 to 16:** April showers bring

May flowers

- **April 20 to 23:** Bug bags

Workshops

The Granby Library is happy to announce these free workshops through their partners at Collaborative for Educational Services. Join in!

The music and movement interactive music and movement workshops will be on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. through April 14 for ages one to five years old.

Yoga for Families: Breathe, Stretch, and Bond - through April 12

The parents only class, Self Care/Relaxation, will be on Thursday evenings from 7 to 8 p.m.

The parent/child yoga classes will be on Monday mornings from 9:30 to 10 a.m.

Incorporating varying mindfulness themes each week, both children and their parents will learn helpful ways to maintain a healthy balance between active move-

ment and tranquil breathing.

Register for music and movement and yoga classes – here's a link to registration:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScWPrY9HyaaCG6nbRGS0j-faC8IlxenSJWLJHSarJWkpn_iQ/formResponse or email earlychildhood@collaborative.org for the Zoom link.

Baby-toddler sign language classes

The classes will be live online on Wednesdays from 10:30 to 11 a.m. These will be held through April 14. Are you ready to help your young child to communicate objects, emotions and desires by using some easy baby sign language?

Email Marti for the zoom link at mwiechman@collaborative.org

National Poetry Month Story walk

Check out the April Story walk "Please Bury Me in the Library" by J. Patrick Lewis short poems range from sweet to silly to laugh-out-loud funny, with clever,

witty and endearing paintings. This book is the perfect treat for book lovers of all ages.

April School Vacation Week

April 20 to 23

Bug Bags – two different bug crafts

The weather is warming up and the bugs have started crawling, flying and buzzing around. Grab a Bug Bag this week and make a couple of cute critters. Pick up an insect I Spy game sheet too.

Yarn Wrapped Initial

This is a great project to display in your room. Create your initial, then wrap it in yarn. Just add glue to the materials provided. Choose yarn color from those available.

Earth Day Book Bundles - Week Long

Ask for an "Earth Day" bundle of books for your desired age group and the library will give you some great books about nature all week long (curbside pickup.) Staff will add an Earth Day activity sheets.



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POLICE LOG**Belchertown Police**

Editor's note: The following are brief explanations of select entries in the Belchertown Police log and arrests for the weeks of March 10 through March 16. The information was provided by a member of the police department based on the review of the detailed log summary. This feature is designed to provide context and explanation to some of the calls police respond to every day. Of the 271 calls police responded to, there were nine incidents, three accidents, four arrest/summons and 11 citations.

ARRESTS/SUMMONS**Friday, March 12**

2:21 a.m. – Karl E. Johnson, 40, of 4 Prospect Heights Lane, Erving was arrested on charges of operating under the influence of alcohol and negligent operation of a motor vehicle. An officer responded to a Brandy Wine Dr for report of an accident with unknown injuries. The calling party said there was smoke coming from the vehicle. The vehicle crashed into a rock, and the reporting party said they were a neighbor. When officers arrived on scene, the operator said they weren't injured and there was no smoke coming from vehicle. The suspect said they took the wrong road was unfamiliar with the roadway. The ambulance responded but the operator didn't want to be transported. A field sobriety test was administered, due to the suspect's failure, they were arrested and charged accordingly.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS**Thursday, March 11**

8:58 a.m. - Officers took a report from a Stadler St resident who reported their registration plate was missing. They estimated it has been missing for approximately a month. A stolen plate form was completed and it was entered as stolen.

Friday, March 12

7:44 p.m. – An officer was on a routine patrol when they were flagged down by a motorist on side of the road. In the south-

bound lane they located a deer stuck by a vehicle. It appeared to be severely injured. The deer was euthanized.

8:49 p.m. – Officers responded to Federal St for a report of one car accident. The operator was travelling north on Federal St when a large branch fell from a pine tree onto the vehicle as it driving. There was damage to the front passenger's side of the vehicle and the roof. No injuries were reported.

Saturday, March 13

2:41 p.m. – Officers responded to a two vehicle accident on Boardman Rd. A vehicle was travelling west when it drifted to the left side of the road, colliding with an oncoming vehicle. The operator of the second vehicle reported they didn't see the vehicle coming.

Sunday, March 14

6:54 p.m. – Officers responded to a residence for a report of all four tires that were slashed on a vehicle. There was a single puncture to each tire, and the reporting party said they thought they knew who responsible. There was no evidence at the time to show who was and no known suspects.

Monday March 15

12:59 p.m. – Officers assisted Belchertown Fire and paramedics.

6:13 p.m. – Officers took a report from a person who reported they were receiving harassing messages through Instagram about photos they had taken of themselves. The reporting party was asked to send money or the massager would send out photos of the reporting party. Officers advised they person not to pay and to block the account. The person on the account was not able to be identified.

2:30 a.m. – Officers responded to Bay Rd and Stebbins St for a report of a wire in the road. The officer noticed a pole was in the road and a support wire on the west bound side of the road. Officers checked the area for damage and any vehicles that

might be involved. There were tire marks and scuff marks on the pole which was moved six inches at the base. It appeared that someone failed to stop and struck the pole. National Grid was notified and moved the pole from the road.

8:44 a.m. – Officers responded to assist animal control with an abandoned dog.

9:33 a.m. – A Belchertown resident came to the station to turn in a set of keys they found on Magnolia Lane. The keys were entered into property and no owner has been found at this time.

2:40 p.m. – An officer spoke with a resident in regard to a scammer changing their bank account affiliated with an unemployment account. They noticed their checks weren't going into their account. The person was advised to contact their bank.

COVID DEATH • from page 1

306 cases of COVID-19, as of March 9. The dashboard also indicates Granby is in the yellow designation, with an 18.7 average daily incident rate per 100,000 and a 2.56% positivity rate.

However, Board of Health member Herb Abelson said there are problems with this data collection.

"It's just extraordinary how iffy a whole lot of this data is and the timing of data related to real events is another enormous issue," he said. "Just like this death we're finding out about and deaths may be the worst of all the things. There is a tremendous delay in finding out about deaths."

Bombardier agreed. He added that the data from the state is old, yet is used to predict what will happen next.

"Even if you look at the state and what they're doing with their colors. They have data from a week ago to do a snapshot into the future," he said. "If you look at the impact by taking the college students, who have all these tons and tons of testing, because they're required to test - it drops the positivity rate down so much. In fact, they're saying it's going down but its only because of the college kids. The positivity rate is on its way up right now when you deduct the college kids."

Abelson also added that the rapid tests being used are not very good and the reporting is often late, if at all.

Another concern are the variants of COVID-19. When asked about whether Dinofest could occur in September, Abelson said it is too soon to tell.

"The squirrelly thing is the variants. We don't know what the biology is going to be and what kind of penetration they're going to have in our community and those around us," he said. "Or how virulent they're really going to turn out to be and if they're anything at all to worry about. No one is sure about that. That's a reason to be cautious right now and take it one step at a time."

The item was moved until the board's April meeting.



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Orioles score early, but fall to Ware

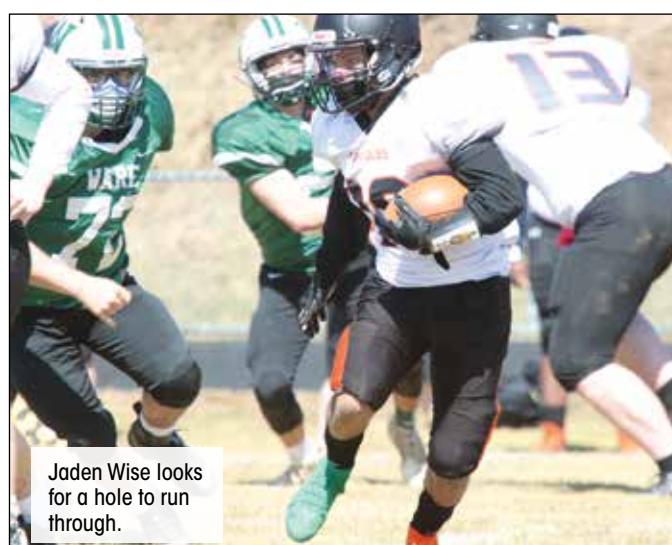
WARE – Belchertown football took the field for the first time since Thanksgiving 2019, and took advantage of an early mistake by the host Indians, but could not manage anything else in a 37-8 loss to open the season last Saturday. Belchertown faces Ludlow this Saturday at 12:30 p.m.

PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

The Belchertown High School football team returned to action on Saturday afternoon at Ware.



Belchertown punts the ball away after its first possession.



GIRLS BASKETBALL

Girls basketball returns to action



BELCHERTOWN – Belchertown High School girls basketball got an opportunity to play some games in the Fall 2 season. Belchertown dropped a pair of games to Monson last Tuesday and Thursday, including a 36-32 defeat last Tuesday evening at Monson High School. In the loss, Gina Camerota led the team with nine points.



Olivia Vogel heads down the court after making a steal.



PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Madsen LePage holds the ball back before making a pass.



The Belchertown offense works during the second quarter of a match-up against Monson last Tuesday.

BASEBALL

Valley Wheel Baseball seeking new talent

GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – The regular season is just a month away and the members of the Valley Wheel Over-30 Baseball League are excited to be playing baseball again.

Last year, the season was cancelled once parks were closed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

An attempt was made by commissioner Jim Nason to hold a short season once modified rules for activity were allowed, but there was not enough interest to keep the league operating.

Now, the league is gearing for a full season, but between circumstances changing during the pandemic and the modifications currently in place for sports The league is definitely in need of more baseball talent.

Nason is hoping “quarantine fatigue” and the need to get outdoors and get active will draw new players to tryouts when they start next weekend.

Tryouts for the league will take place Saturday, April 3, and the next two Sundays, April 11 and 18.

There are normally six teams in the league and the hope is to continue to have that tradition as players begin to make their way out to the fields The normal Valley Wheel season is 15 games beginning April 25 this year and going until the end of July. The league plays nine-inning games, allowing all participants an opportunity to get plenty of at-bats and lots of time in the field.

The top four teams in the league make the playoffs and the semifinals and finals are held in the first two weeks of August. The schedule also features a cou-

See **BASEBALL**, page 12 •

SPORTS

Purse structure announced for 2021 season

WATERBURY, VT and NAPLES, ME – American-Canadian Tour (ACT) and Pro All Star Series (PASS) officials have announced the purse structure for the five weekly divisions set for competition at Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park in 2021.

A total of nearly \$24,000 in posted awards have been set to be distributed to the Sunoco Modifieds, Late Models, SK Light Modifieds, Limited Sportsman, and Mini Stocks at each event. All five divisions will compete as part of the six-race oval track event schedule at Thompson, which begins with the annual Icebreaker on April 10 and 11. The schedule also includes four Wednesday night races in the summer (June 16, July 7, Aug. 11 and Sept. 15) and the Sunoco World Series (Oct. 8 to 10).

"When Tom (Mayberry) and I agreed to take on this role at Thompson, one of our priorities was posting a fair purse for all divisions," ACT managing partner Cris Michaud said. "I raced for 20+ years, and I experienced firsthand the value of an extra dollar. We've put together a competitive structure that rewards everyone who shows up and will help teams get their cars to the track."

The roar of the Sunoco Modifieds will return to the high-banks with drivers chasing a \$1,500 winning prize for their 30-lap feature races. With \$900 on the line for second, \$600 for third and \$200 to start each race, the Sunoco Modified purse itself rises over \$8,500. Some of the top names in local Modified racing are expected to compete, including Keith Rocco, who looks to continue his dominance of the competitive class on Thompson's 0.625-mile oval. Other names expected for the opener include Troy Talman, a former Thompson winner.

The Late Models, which will again fol-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Information has been released for racing purses for the 2021 season.

low ACT Tour rules — including the addition of the new Hoosier tire — will chase \$1,200 to win. As part of a purse better than \$7,000 throughout the field, Late Model drivers will open the season with a 40-lap special at the Icebreaker. They will continue to thrill Thompson fans with some of the top competitors from across New England. Names like Woody Pitkat, who swept both races in 2020, along with Nick Johnson, defending ACT Tour Rookie of the Year Derek Gluchacki and more will be in competition.

The Limited Sportsman are set to return with a purse over \$3,000 of their own and \$350 on the line to win. Known as one of the most exciting divisions at Thompson each year, the Limited Sportsman keep fans on the edge of their seat with two, and often three-wide action throughout the field.

Early entries for the season include former Thompson champions Kyle Gero and Larry Barnett, along with former Seekonk Speedway Sportsman champion Corey Fanning. At the Icebreaker, Limited

Sportsman drivers may also take the opportunity to compete in a 8-Cylinder Open Street Stock open on Saturday, which pays \$1,000 to win.

Rising over \$3,000, the SK Light Modified purse includes another \$350 to win, with \$250 for second and a strong distribution of funds throughout the field. As a division that puts some of the youth of Modified racing and veterans together, it's expected to be another stout year.

The Mini Stock thunder will return to Thompson with feature races set for \$200 to win and over \$1,600 in presented awards. Early entries for the season include Thompson veterans Russ Barboza, Tommy Silva and former division champion Steve Michalski.

Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park opens its 82nd season of oval track racing with the Icebreaker on Saturday, April 10 and Sunday, April 11. The 10-division card includes the \$10,000-to-win Icebreaker 125 for the Thompson Outlaw Open Modified Series, the PASS Super Late Models, and five Thompson weekly divisions. The 8-Cylinder Street Stock Open, NEMA Lites, and EXIT Realty Pro Truck Challenge round out the card. An optional Test N' Tune practice day is slated for Friday, April 9 with all Icebreaker divisions welcome.

College conference moves forward with spring competition

WESTFIELD – The eight Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC) Presidents announced today that they have approved a plan to have competition for the spring sports of baseball, men's golf, women's lacrosse, softball and men's and women's outdoor track and field. The presidents have also approved the continuation of practice for fall and winter MASCAC teams subject to health and safety, testing and tracing protocols in place to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

"The MASCAC continues to meet regularly with the presidents, athletic directors, athletic trainers and other essential staff as we bring our student-athletes back to the playing field, safely, while adhering to all state, federal and NCAA guidelines," said MASCAC Commissioner Angela Baumann. "It is our intention to have these athletic events as long as the conditions allow us to move forward safely. The MASCAC office and eight MASCAC Presidents will be monitoring practices and competition to ensure the continued health and safety of our student-athletes and staff."

It will remain the decision of each member institution to determine if they can safely participate in intercollegiate athletics this spring and in which sports they will permit competition. These decisions will be made in consultation with campus health professionals and the MASCAC Commissioner.

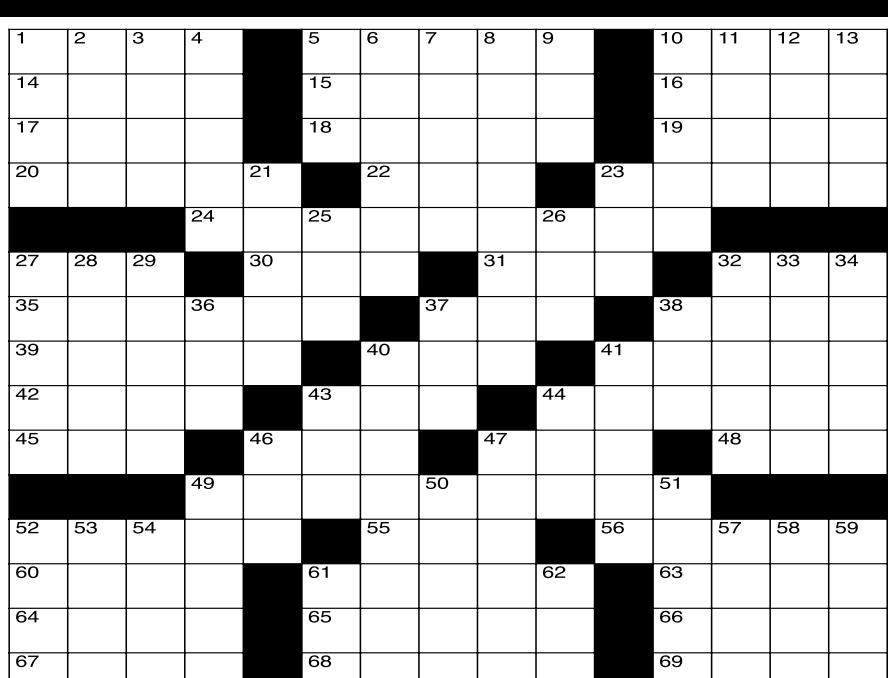
The presidents have approved a conference schedule where the institutions will play the same school each week in baseball, softball and women's lacrosse. In addition, the membership has approved a men's golf and outdoor track and field championship. Additionally, the presidents have authorized institutions to schedule non-conference contests, provided all non-conference teams follow prescribed MASCAC health and safety guidance and protocols. Institutions will not be traveling to compete against teams out of state.

As the MASCAC teams continue to participate in athletic activities, it is the continued responsibility of all student-athletes and staff to stay diligent in their safety efforts on and off the field of play. Individual member institutions reserve the right to halt competition if the health of the campus community is put at risk. In the event of an increase of COVID-related cases on any of our campuses, the schedules may be adjusted, which might include stoppage of play.

"The presidents are excited to move forward with plans for spring sports competition," said Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts President James Birge, Chair of the MASCAC Council of Presidents. "As we plan for spring sports competition, we will continue to fine-tune protocols to ensure the safety of student-athletes, coaches, staff and the campus communities," said President Birge.

Consistent with state restrictions on gathering limits, spectators will not be permitted at MASCAC contests at this time. This policy may be revisited for outdoor sports if conditions improve and subject to state and local health authorities' guidance. For the enjoyment of family, friends and fans of our student-athletes, the MASCAC will continue to livestream contests on MASCAC. tv.

Throughout the 2020-21 academic year, the MASCAC will be celebrating its' 50th anniversary with special features, facts and trivia commemorating the event. Our conference has a rich history of success on the playing field and in the classroom. Over the academic year, the conference will be highlighting the student-athletes, teams, coaches, and administrators from the last 50 years.

**CLUES ACROSS**

- Volcanic crater
- Long times
- Swedish rock group
- Having the means to do something
- Rods or spindles
- La __ Tar Pits, Hollywood
- Missing soldiers
- Measuring instrument
- All of the components considered individually
- Play " __ Irish Rose"
- Gene
- Barrels
- London-based soccer team
- Feline
- Breed of sheep
- Body part
- Doctors' group
- One who follows the rules
- Cigarette residue

CLUES DOWN

- Ancient Greek sophist
- Polish yeast cakes
- Promotional materials
- Pancakes made from buckwheat flour
- Completed perfectly
- Photo
- A peninsula in SW Asia
- The common gibbon
- Disfigure
- Ribonucleic acid
- Japanese honorific
- Pieces of music
- Expressed pleasure
- Having ten
- Type of sword
- Humble request for help
- Eating houses
- Italian Seaport
- Cain and __
- Expresses surprise
- Secret political clique
- Yields manila hemp
- River in central Italy
- Political outsiders
- Greek sorceress
- Body part

CLUES DOWN

- Mental illness
- Mother
- Jewish calendar month
- Jai __, sport
- Establish again
- Swiss river
- Racetrack wager
- __ but goodie
- Closeness
- Soviet Socialist Republic
- At right angles to a ship's length
- Women's undergarments
- Mountain stream
- Expresses pleasure
- Painful places on the body
- Automobile
- Scandinavian god of battle
- Expresses surprise
- Measure the depth
- U. of Miami's mascot
- Political outsiders
- Brain injury science
- Body part

BASEBALL • from page 11

ple of weeknights games and a special Mother's Day weekend Saturday game.

There are still modified rules for adult baseball under the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, which requires mask-wearing, social distancing when possible, and no spitting among the habit baseball players are not allowed to engage in. While the game play is largely the same, the mask-wearing rule was one that was the subject of controversy last summer and ultimately led to the cancellation of the shortened season.

With vaccinations in Massachusetts clearing one million people and the state entering Phase 4 of the re-opening plan earlier this week, Nason is hopeful the restrictions will ease as the season goes on, especially as it relates to gathering.

Comradery is one of the staples of the league, which has usually included tailgating after games. That is a practice that will also have to be on hold until restrictions lift.

For more information on getting involved in adult baseball, go to www.valleywheelbaseball.com. To play in the league, you must be 28-years-old before June 1. In order to participate in the league as a pitcher, you must be 30-years-old before June 1. Players can participate in at least one of the three tryouts dates, usually held at Blunt Park, and then a draft is held prior to the start of the season.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Belchertown Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

Pursuant to the authority of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 131, Section 40 (Wetlands Protection Act) and the Belchertown Wetland Bylaw, the Belchertown Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing virtually on **Monday, April 12, 2021 at 7:00 PM**. The purpose of this meeting is to review a Notice of Intent for maintenance and improvements along the X176 Transmission Line. Anyone interested in this matter should attend remotely.

03/25/2021

Belchertown Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

Pursuant to the authority of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 131, Section 40 (Wetlands Protection Act) and the Belchertown Wetland Bylaw, the Belchertown Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing virtually on **Monday, April 12, 2021 at 7:00 PM**. The purpose of this meeting is to review a Notice of Intent for the construction of a single family home at Jensen Street, Map 244 Parcel 80. Anyone interested in this matter should attend remotely: <https://www.gotomeet.me/BelchertownConservation>

03/25/2021

**Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampshire Probate and
Family Court
15 Atwood Drive
Northampton, MA 01060
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Docket No. HS21P0146EA
Estate of:

**Donald Rockafeller Sessler
Also known as:
Donald R. Sessler**

Date of Death: 07/07/2020
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
FORMAL
ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal

**Probate of Will with
Appointment of Personal
Representative** has been
filed by Alan D. Sessler of
Westfield, MA requesting
that the Court enter a formal
Decree and Order and for
such other relief as requested
in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests
that: **Alan D. Sessler** of
Westfield, MA be appointed
as Personal Representative(s)
of said estate to serve
Without Surety on the bond
in an unsupervised adminis-
tration.

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day, action may be taken
without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative
appointed under the
MUPC in an unsupervised
administration is not required
to file an inventory or annual
accounts with the Court.
Persons interested in the
estate are entitled to notice
regarding the administration
directly from the Personal
Representative and may petition
the Court in any matter
relating to the estate, including
the distribution of assets
and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Linda S
Fidnick**, First Justice of this
Court.

Date: March 19, 2021
Michael J. Carey
Register of Probate
03/25/2021

**Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampshire Probate and
Family Court
15 Atwood Drive
Northampton, MA 01060
(413)586-8500**

Docket No. HS21P0114EA
Estate of:

**Robert George Smith
Also known as:
Robert G. Smith**

Date of Death: 01/12/2021
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
FORMAL
ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal

**Probate of Will with
Appointment of Personal
Representative** has been
filed by Timothy R. Smith
of Belchertown, MA request-
ing that the Court enter a formal
Decree and Order and for
such other relief as requested
in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests
that: **Timothy R. Smith**
of Belchertown, MA be
appointed as Personal
Representative(s) of said est-
ate to serve **Without Surety**

The Petitioner requests
that: **Brenda Carol**

on the bond in an **unsuper-
vised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to
obtain a copy of the Petition
from the Petitioner or at
the Court. You have a right
to object to this proceeding.
To do so, you or your
attorney must file a written
appearance and objection
at this Court before: **10:00
a.m. on the return day of
04/07/2021**.

This is NOT a hearing
date, but a deadline by
which you must file a written
appearance and objection if
you object to this proceeding.
If you fail to file a timely
written appearance and objection
followed by an affidavit of Objections
within thirty (30) days of the return
day, action may be taken
without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative
appointed under the
MUPC in an unsupervised
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Persons interested in the
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directly from the Personal
Representative and may petition
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the distribution of assets
and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Linda S
Fidnick**, First Justice of this
Court.

Date: March 02, 2021
Michael J. Carey
Register of Probate
03/25/2021

**Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampshire Probate and
Family Court
15 Atwood Drive
Northampton, MA 01060
(413)586-8500**

Docket No. HS21P0132EA
Estate of:

**Donald Richard Steeley
Also known as:
Donald R. Steeley**

Date of Death: 12/05/2020
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
FORMAL
ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal

**Probate of Will with
Appointment of Personal
Representative** has been
filed by Brenda Carol Branchini-
Lage of Durham, NC request-
ing that the Court enter a formal
Decree and Order and for
such other relief as requested
in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests
that: **Brenda Carol**

Branchini-Lage of Durham,
NC be appointed as Personal
Representative(s) of said est-
ate to serve **Without Surety**
on the bond in an **unsuper-
vised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to
obtain a copy of the Petition
from the Petitioner or at
the Court. You have a right
to object to this proceeding.
To do so, you or your
attorney must file a written
appearance and objection
at this Court before: **10:00
a.m. on the return day of
04/14/2021**.

This is NOT a hearing
date, but a deadline by
which you must file a written
appearance and objection if
you object to this proceeding.
If you fail to file a timely
written appearance and objection
followed by an Affidavit of Objections
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day, action may be taken
without further notice to you.

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date, but a deadline by
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you object to this proceeding.
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directly from the Personal
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the Court in any matter
relating to the estate, including
the distribution of assets
and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Linda S
Fidnick**, First Justice of this
Court.

Date: March 12, 2021
Michael J. Carey
Register of Probate
03/25/2021

**Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampshire Probate and
Family Court
15 Atwood Drive
Northampton, MA 01060
(413)586-8500**

Docket No. HS21P0132EA
Estate of:

**Donald Richard Steeley
Also known as:
Donald R. Steeley**

Date of Death: 12/05/2020
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
FORMAL
ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal

**Probate of Will with
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The Petitioner requests
that: **Brenda Carol**</

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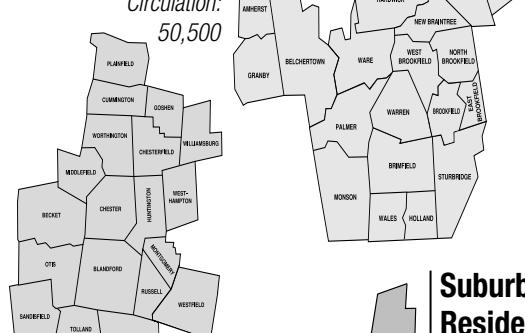
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5	6	7	8
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21 Base Price \$26.50	22 Base Price \$27.00	23 Base Price \$27.50	24 Base Price \$28.00
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29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
37 Base Price \$34.50	38 Base Price \$35.00	39 Base Price \$35.50	40 Base Price \$36.00

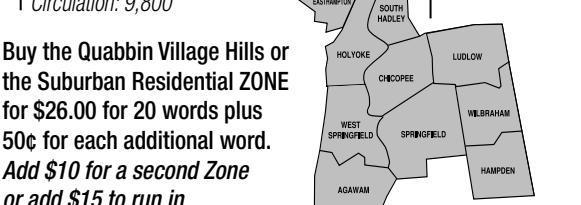
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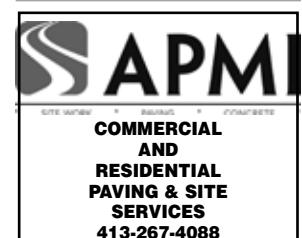
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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

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LICENSE FEES • from page 5

Fund. At the current trajectory, MassWildlife will have a \$4.1 million revenue gap and deplete the balance of the Inland Fish and Game Fund by fiscal 2025.

'Path Forward'

"The challenge is finding a path forward," Tisa said. "We only have so many tools in our tool box," noting that the license fee structure is the one tool the Department of Fish and Game and MassWildlife controls.

Under the new proposal, residents would pay \$40 for hunting, fishing and trapping licenses. Sporting licenses would increase from \$40 to \$75. Archery and primitive firearms stamps would increase from \$5.10 to \$20. All other hunting stamps and permits would increase from \$5 to \$20. Additionally, MassWildlife is proposing a new stamp for pheasant and quail hunting at \$20.

"We don't like the idea at all," Tisa said. "It's unfortunate it's happening at a difficult time," but the proposal should sustain the Inland Fish and Game Fund until fiscal 2030.

Tisa and Fish and Game Commissioner Ron Amidon said that the state legislature would need to address other changes, whether they be reimbursing for free licenses, imposing fees on other "non-consumptive" public land users like bird watchers or kayakers, or increasing funding. Unfortunately, they told those in attendance March 9, neither one of them can lobby legislators for such changes. That, they said, is incumbent upon individual residents.

Mixed reaction

Reaction to the proposal has been mixed. While most seem to understand the issues at hand, increasing the cost of licenses is an

added expense for no added benefits in the field. Some expressed disappointment that there is little bass management taking place statewide, others that hunters seem to be taking the brunt of the increases. Georgetown resident Bob Pasquale asked if there had been any thought to adding a trout stamp, as anglers are able to use their licenses essentially 24/7, 365 days a year.

Tisa said they had considered such a stamp, however it would likely create more problems, particularly with enforcement and fish mortality rates. He noted that unlike states, such as Virginia, which have few trout-stocked waterbodies, nearly all of Massachusetts' freshwater resources are stocked with trout. And, unlike pheasant or quail hunters, who can easily identify a flushing pheasant or quail from a ruffed grouse or a non-game species, anglers typically have no idea what fish took the bait on the other end of the line.

"Everyone walking a dog on a wildlife management area [during

hunting season] is interfering with a hunt," Norwood resident Steve Flaherty said, expressing concerns during the March 9 session. "We need somebody at the state level advocating for us."

Amidon and Tisa said they need residents to advocate the legislature for changes, whether it be funding, access or enforcement. They also reminded those on the call that should the new license fee schedule move forward, there will be public hearings. Any resident wishing to provide input on the proposals are invited to direct comment electronically at mass.gov/masswildlife-funding or by sending mail to MassWildlife re: License Fee, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581.

'Make it easy'

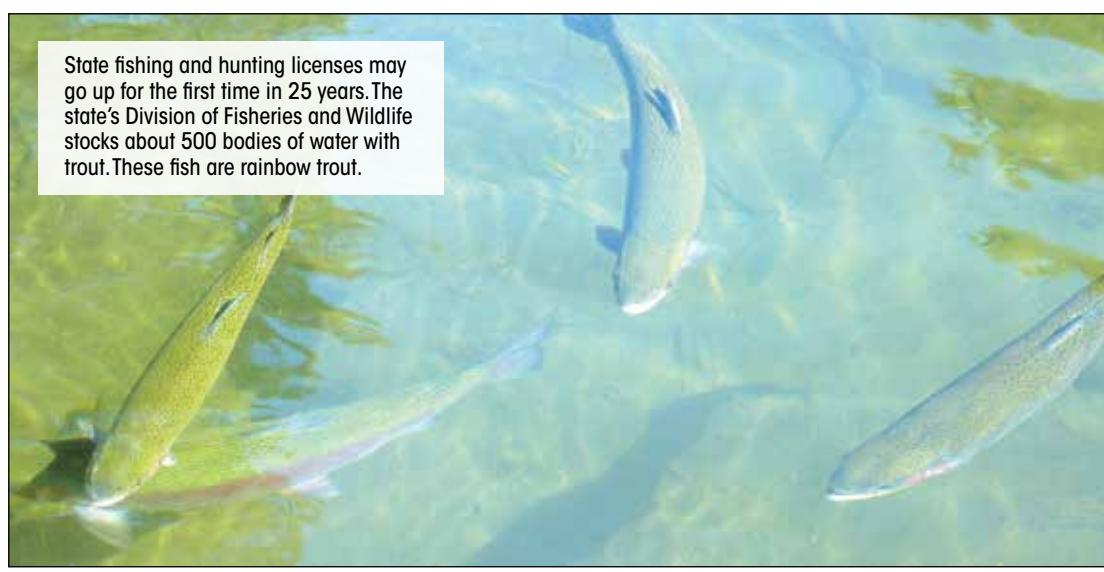
While he was unable to attend the information session, Chicopee sportsman Nelson Molina, who has been hunting for the last three years, expressed his frustration that the state seems to be making it harder for folks to enter the woods legally, especially those in urban communities.

"How do you make [hunting] appealing to people who have never hunted?" Molina asked, noting his own struggles as a new hunter trying to learn everything from safe firearm handling to where to go.

"I ate pheasant for the first time in my life this year and it's not as crazy people make it seem," he said.

Molina said the issue, from his perspective, is a tricky one as the state has only gotten more restrictive with gun laws and the free, mandatory hunter education (required for new hunters) courses are almost non-existent in Western Massachusetts. He said he paid to take the Texas hunter education program online because he couldn't find a course in Massachusetts that fit his schedule. He said more programs should be offered online and locally in order to remove barriers to accessibility.

"You have to make it easy," Molina said. "People don't want to do work."



Proposed Hunting and Fishing License Fees 2022

(Source: MassWildlife)

- Resident fishing (17 and older) - \$40
- Resident Fishing (65-69) - \$20
- Resident fishing 3-day - \$20
- Non-resident fishing - \$50
- Non-resident minor fishing (15-17) - \$8
- Non-resident 3-day fishing - \$30.50
- Resident trapping - \$40
- Resident trapping (65-69) - \$20
- Non-resident trapping - \$215
- Resident hunting - \$40
- Non-resident big game - \$112
- Non-resident small game - \$78
- Resident sporting - \$75
- Resident sporting (65-69) - \$37.50
- Trap registration number/renewal - \$20
- Archery stamp - \$20
- Primitive firearms stamp - \$20
- Waterfowl stamp - \$20
- Antlerless deer permit - \$20
- Turkey permit - \$20
- Bear permit - \$20
- Pheasant and quail stamp - \$20

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Call Mary at 413-758-5377 for special pricing and to book your tour!

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Cedarbrook Village
at Ware

An Everbrook Senior Living Community

Independent, Assisted and Memory Care